

Winners of the Patents for Humanity Award receive a one-time certificate to accelerate a process or application at the PTO, as described in the program rules. For several years, small businesses and global health groups have told me that the prize would be more usable, particularly for small business innovators, if the acceleration certificates awarded were transferable to a third party. Award winners who are not able to use the acceleration certificate themselves will be able to transfer the certificate to another inventor, including through sale, allowing the winner to receive a cash benefit. By making the certificates transferable, we are increasing the value of this humanitarian innovation prize without using a single taxpayer dollar.

The thoughtful structure of the Patents for Humanity Award program, set forth in its founding documents in the Federal Register, will ensure that this program remains sustainable and does not unduly burden the PTO or other patent applicants whose applications are pending before the Office. The award is granted to only a select number of patent holders per year—approximately 10 or fewer, with a further 20 applications receiving honorable mentions—and the PTO has provided clear guidance on the types of processes for which the certificates may be used. Program judges are selected based on recognized subject matter expertise, with clear competition criteria, and rules in place to prevent conflicts of interest. These practices and safeguards, which are described in detail in the Federal Register at 79 Fed. Reg. 18670 and 77 Fed. Reg. 6544, will ensure that the program continues to operate appropriately and well.

The Patents for Humanity Program Improvement Act is a straightforward and bipartisan bill that will strengthen this valuable innovation program and encourage inventions to be used for humanitarian good. I thank other Senators for supporting this bill and urge the House to pass it without delay.

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1402) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1402

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Patents for Humanity Program Improvement Act”.

SEC. 2. TRANSFERABILITY OF ACCELERATION CERTIFICATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A holder of an acceleration certificate issued pursuant to the Patents for Humanity Program (established in the notice entitled “Humanitarian Awards Pilot Program”, published at 77 Fed. Reg. 6544 (February 8, 2012)), or any successor

thereto, of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, may transfer (including by sale) the entitlement to such acceleration certificate to another person.

(b) REQUIREMENT.—An acceleration certificate transferred under subsection (a) shall be subject to any other applicable limitations under the notice entitled “Humanitarian Awards Pilot Program”, published at 77 Fed. Reg. 6544 (February 8, 2012), or any successor thereto.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER-CARE SYSTEM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 466.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 466) recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the month of May gives us the chance to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system and to consider ways to improve policies and practices to ensure that children are in safe, loving, and permanent homes. There are nearly 415,000 children living in foster care; more than 255,000 entered the foster care system in 2014 alone.

According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, AFCARS, data for fiscal year 2014, the vast majority of foster children reside with a foster parent: 29 percent live in the foster family home of a relative, and 46 percent live in the foster family home of a non-relative. The rest live in institutions, 8 percent; groups homes, 6 percent; pre-adoptive homes, 4 percent; trial home visits, 5 percent; supervised independent living, 1 percent; or are runaways, 1 percent.

As co-founder and co-chair of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I led a bipartisan and bicameral group of colleagues in introducing legislation recognizing May as National Foster Care Month. The resolution aims to bring foster care issues to the forefront and recognize the essential role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care.

While there have been vast improvements over the years, there are many challenges still facing our Nation's youth. These children have experienced abuse or neglect, often both. They can

be moved from home to home, transferred from one school to the next, and endure trauma and mental health challenges. Older foster youth face difficult challenges as well. They deal with separation from their parents, educational instability, separation disorders, and depression, as well as challenge of transitioning to adulthood on their own. Whereas youth in foster care are much more likely to face educational instability with 65 percent of former foster children experiencing at least seven school changes while in care. The number of youth who age out of foster care has steadily increased for the past decade as well.

The resolution encourages Congress to implement policy that further the goals of safety and permanency. The resolution currently has 24 co-sponsors.

Because there are so many issues that affect youth in the foster care system, it is important that members of Congress understand the realities beyond the beltway. That is why I helped form the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth. Our caucus was created to be a clearinghouse for members in the Senate to discuss policy issues that cross many committee jurisdictions. Our caucus was also created to help generate better ideas and best practices. We want people to learn from both youth and experts. And we want these ideas to be put into practice. Today, 21 Senators are committed members of the Foster Youth Caucus. It is a bipartisan caucus that focuses on understanding the challenges that foster youth face and finding solutions that can improve their lives.

Because of the challenges facing older youth, I held a hearing as chairman of the Judiciary Committee to examine the interplay between the foster care system and the juvenile justice system when children are involved with both systems. The hearing focused on what data, or lack thereof, currently exists about children involved in both systems, the risk factors associated with foster children who become exposed to the juvenile justice system, and how to improve on current best practices implemented by the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

My goal for holding this hearing was to spark innovative solutions and to forge relationships between two distinct groups—the juvenile justice system and child welfare system. The experts in these fields must come together to help dually involved youth who are in need of services.

It was also a renewed call for Congress to pass the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act, which I helped author. If this measure is enacted, States participating in the juvenile justice formula grants program couldn't lock up foster care children merely for running away from a foster home. Some of these runaways are fleeing abusive situations and detention isn't the right place for them. Our bill, which awaits action by the full Senate, also encourages States

receiving juvenile justice formula grants to screen children with mental illness or substance abuse issues. Finally, our bill would encourage States to rely on policies and practices that reflect the most recent research on what works best with troubled youth.

Also during May, the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth held several forums to allow foster youth to share their experiences and to hear from experts about how policies can be improved for children and families.

The caucus hosted a three-part series of panel discussions on the impact of substance abuse and mental health disorders on children and families involved in the child welfare system. We heard directly from youth, learned more about how the opioid epidemic is impacting families, how to prevent foster care by working with families, and how to better achieve positive outcomes through in-home services. We were fortunate to have Iowa's Judge William Owens from the Wapello County Family Drug Court. Judge Owens highlighted how professionals working with child welfare-involved families have changed their practice and policies in his county leading to improved outcomes for families.

On the same topic, I co-hosted Dr. Phil who shared his expertise with policymakers in helping families in crisis dealing with substance abuse issues. He focused on the link between the current opioid epidemic and the rising number of children placed in foster care.

The caucus also partnered with other child welfare organizations on a briefing about foster parent recruitment and retention. The frontline caregivers for hundreds of thousands of children in foster care are foster parents. They provide physical care, emotional support, education advocacy, and, many times, a permanent home and future for these kids. Sometimes they are relatives; sometimes they are complete strangers. But no matter who they are, they are opening their hearts and homes to children in need. Because more children are coming into care, we need to do all we can to recruit quality foster parents to keep these kids safe, healthy, in school, and thriving in society.

At the end of the month, I helped co-sponsor a briefing to discuss effective practices for youth transitioning out of foster care. Because 26,000 young people leave foster care without a forever family and with limited resources and little support, we need to do better to guide and help this population successfully navigate the real world of adulthood. It was an opportunity to learn about intensive, individualized and clinically focused case management and counseling, which has proven results for long-term success.

Finally, I participated in a Senate Finance Committee hearing titled, "Can Evidence Based Practices Improve Outcomes for Vulnerable Individuals and Families?" As a senior mem-

ber of the Finance Committee and the author of many child welfare laws that have gone through that committee, I was able to listen and ask questions of experts about how we can move to more evidenced-based programs and learn from programs that are successful.

The hope for panel discussions and briefings is to find innovative solutions—whether through legislation or awareness and shifts in practice.

This year, I also urged the Department of Education to work with States to implement a provision I helped pass in the Every Student Succeeds Act. This education bill includes new data collection and reporting provisions to shine a light on achievement gaps for students who have long been overlooked in federally funded education, including homeless and foster youth.

I have also worked on several bills this year to improve foster care policies.

The Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act would reduce the amount of time it takes to place children by incentivizing more States to implement the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise, or NEICE system. Six pilot States that utilized NEICE, on average, reduced wait times for children by 30 percent and anticipate savings of \$1.6 million per year in reduced copying, mailing, and administrative costs. Throughout the country, caseworkers often avoid exploring out-of-state placements because of the long delays in processing the paperwork. Our bill gives incentives to States to join the NEICE system and streamline the paperwork to make foster care placements and eventual adoption happen faster. The more we can do to give children safe, stable homes, the better. The increased displacement of kids due to parental substance abuse, including opioid abuse, makes this cause especially important.

The Protecting Families Affected by Substance Abuse Act would reauthorize for 5 years the regional partnership grants that were created in 2006 when I was chairman of the Finance Committee. While the original intent of the 2006 grants was to address methamphetamine abuse, the scope expanded to other substances as new problems emerged. Opioid addiction is a key focus of the new bill, as we have seen the havoc prescription painkillers and heroin continue to have on families and communities around the nation. The grants support regional partnerships for services including early intervention and preventive services; child and family counseling; mental health services; parenting skills training; and replication of successful models for providing family-based, comprehensive long-term substance abuse treatment services.

Supporting Foster Youth Who Age Out—this bill would allow States to use these Federal dollars for foster youth services up to age 23 and further

help those who age out of care with more opportunities to transition to adulthood. It also would allow greater flexibility for States to use their funds in a manner that best benefits the youth population they serve. The legislation builds on the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, created by then-Senator John Chafee in 1999 to better support youth who age out of the foster care system at the age of 18. The program provides financial support for youth who are transitioning to adulthood with the goal to make them self-sufficient.

For years, I have tried to call attention to the issues facing foster care youth, which consists of more than 415,000 children nationwide, more than 6,000 of whom live with one of Iowa's approximately 2,700 foster families. As founder and co-chair of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I often have the opportunity to hear firsthand from kids growing up in foster care. Foster youth long to be heard. These children need permanency and a loving family, not to be shuffled around from home to home. They tell me that important improvements have recently been made, but there are still gaps in services that could be solved with a combination of policy changes and citizen involvement.

While this population of youth deserves year-round attention, we honor them this month. This is an especially important time to have discussions about how we can improve their lives and strengthen their families. It is important, too, that we remember all of the other individuals involved in helping children who are in the foster care system—including caseworkers, social workers, guardians, child welfare advocates, and foster families.

Our work on this issue will continue.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 466) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 16, 2016, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF MAY 2016 AS "MENTAL HEALTH MONTH"

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 480, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 480) supporting the designation of May 2016 as "Mental Health Month."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.